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Security Council
Sixty-third year

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations: cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union; cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization; cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations; cooperation between the United Nations and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization; cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community; cooperation between the United Nations and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries; cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe; cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization; cooperation between the United Nations and the Eurasian Economic Community; cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie; cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union; cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States; cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons; cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference; cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum; cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization; cooperation between the United Nations and the Southern African Development Community

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Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations**

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In a number of resolutions, the General Assembly noted with satisfaction the active participation of regional and other organizations in the work of the United Nations. The present report is prepared pursuant to the most recent requests of the Assembly that the Secretary-General submit a report on the implementation of those resolutions at its sixty-third session.

As requested by the General Assembly in paragraph 4 (l) of the annex to its resolution 58/316, this is a consolidated report on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations.

In its resolution 1809 (2008), the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to include, in his regular reporting to the Council, assessments of progress on the cooperation between the United Nations and relevant regional organizations. This report, therefore, is also submitted to the Security Council.

** The present report is submitted three working days after the deadline to allow the inclusion of amendments to the text provided by United Nations bodies after the draft report had been submitted to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General for approval.

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I. Introduction

1. Chapter II of the present report has been prepared pursuant to the 14 most recent resolutions in which the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on the cooperation between the United Nations and a number of regional and other intergovernmental organizations.

2. The Security Council, in its presidential statement of 28 March 2007 (S/PRST/2007/7), requested the Secretary-General to provide a report, in consultation with the relevant regional organizations, in particular the African Union (AU), on specific proposals on how the United Nations can better support further cooperation and coordination with regional organizations on arrangements under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. The Secretary-General's report on this matter was submitted to the Council in April 2008 (S/2008/186).

3. In its resolution 1809 (2008), the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to include, in his regular reporting to the Council, assessments of progress on the cooperation between the United Nations and relevant regional organizations. This report also constitutes part of the response to that request.

II. Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other intergovernmental organizations

A. African Union

4. The United Nations Security Council held meetings on 28 March 2007 and 16 April 2008 on the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union, in the maintenance of international peace and security. On 11 June 2007 in Addis Ababa and on 17 April 2008 in New York, joint meetings were held between the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. In March and April 2007, the Security Council Affairs Division of the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat organized a training programme for staff of the AU Peace and Security Council on the working methods of the Security Council and the functions of the Division.

5. The United Nations and AU agreed that the implementation of the 10-year capacity-building programme for the Union should start with a focus on peace and security. In November 2007, the regional consultations mechanism of the United Nations system established a peace and security cluster led by the Department of Political Affairs through the United Nations Liaison Office to AU. The seventh and eighth meetings of the mechanism were held in Addis Ababa in November 2006 and 2007, respectively. The Department of Political Affairs has also been providing support for the establishment of the Union's Panel of the Wise and in a number of other areas, such as mediation support, electoral assistance, support to AU policy organs, gender mainstreaming and the AU border programme. The Department of Political Affairs and its AU counterparts decided to hold regular consultations aimed at strengthening cooperation in the prevention and management of conflict, the first of which was held in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia, in July 2008.

6. The United Nations and AU have deepened their collaborative and mutually reinforcing relationship with the establishment of the African Union-United Nations

Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and the planning and support for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). In 2007, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat established the African Peacekeeping Support Group, composed of civilian, military and police experts, who provide technical advice in priority areas identified by the AU Commission. It supports the development of an African standby force as a key component of the African Peace and Security Architecture and efforts to prevent conflict and maintain durable peace in Africa, and assists in the development of the institutional capacity of AU for mission planning, mission management and logistic resource management within the overall context of an integrated and long-term approach.

7. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat supports AU in the implementation of the African Youth Charter. In Addis Ababa in December 2007, the Department and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) organized a training workshop on assessing national youth policies involving representatives of Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda. The Department, ECA, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and AU described and evaluated youth policies and related programmes. The workshop strengthened the countries' commitment to the African Youth Charter and promoted activities for the Year of African Youth in 2008. The Alliance of Civilizations and the Pan-African Youth Movement are jointly supporting the youth solidarity fund, which is currently in its pilot phase and will award small grants to outstanding youth-led intercultural dialogue projects. A youth advisory committee, nominated by regional youth platforms, advises the Alliance on projects to fund.

8. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs also supports AU within the framework of the Governance and Public Administration Programme of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. The Programme serves as a framework for collective Africa-wide action on governance and public administration, designed to mobilize global and continental partners around an agenda that establishes African ownership and intellectual leadership. Key activities include the strengthening of parliaments' information systems in collaboration with the Pan-African Parliament; support for implementation of the Charter for the Public Service in Africa; support for ministers of local government in leadership capacity-building for poverty reduction; the development of a United Nations peacebuilding portal, an interactive website involving non-governmental organizations (NGOs) engaged in peacebuilding and conflict prevention in sub-Saharan Africa; and support for the Africa governance inventory portal.

9. The Department of Public Information of the Secretariat provides a channel for promoting AU policies and activities, including those of its regional economic commissions and the New Partnership for Africa's Development through the *Africa Renewal* magazine, the special edition *Africa Renewal NEPAD Reader* and short feature articles published in major media in Africa and Asia. In 2007 and 2008, the Department provided advice on the new AU information, communications and advocacy strategy, including the formulation of information goals and priorities for 2008-2011. It also provided input to the New Partnership communications strategy and worked closely with AU in disseminating public information on Darfur in the lead-up to the transition from the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS) into UNAMID in December 2007. United Nations Radio and the United Nations News Centre covered joint conflict-resolution efforts in Africa and reported regularly on actions moving the Darfur peace process forward.

10. The Department of Public Information provided communications support to the Millennium Development Goals Africa Steering Group, which was convened by the Secretary-General in September 2007 and includes the principals of AU and the European Commission. The Department organized press conferences for two meetings of the Steering Group and has been supporting the issuance of the Group's recommendations in May 2008. United Nations information centres were involved in a number of activities: the United Nations Information Centre in Accra provided media support and arranged press briefings for a Security Council mission, which met the President of the Republic of Ghana in his capacity as President of AU in June 2007. In October 2006, the United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe organized a lecture in Bonn, Germany, by the President of the AU Commission, which received considerable media coverage. In New York, the Department sponsored a photo exhibition devoted to AU peacekeepers in Darfur.

11. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat has continued to work closely with AU to integrate and promote the protection of civilians in its policies and operations. There have been numerous joint efforts to better protect civilians in armed conflict and enhance coordination for humanitarian assistance. AMIS/UNAMID and the international humanitarian community have worked closely together to reduce threats facing vulnerable populations and to develop community policing mechanisms, including joint firewood patrols. Similarly, community-based conflict-mediation mechanisms have been established aimed at reducing tensions between displaced populations and host communities and improving humanitarian access. A workshop on the protection of civilians was held in Dakar in April 2007, which recommended that regional organizations develop, with United Nations support, strategies and policy frameworks for the protection of civilians in armed conflict, which could be used to guide their members and activities. The Office is improving regional and country level responses to humanitarian crises and has established an AU Liaison Office in Addis Ababa.

12. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs spearheaded the discussions on the humanitarian and social issues cluster of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and supported the joint development of projects and protocols. In December 2006, the AU/United Nations jointly chaired the International Conference, which resulted in the signing of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region by 11 Heads of States in Nairobi. The Pact's three humanitarian protocols deal with property rights, care and treatment for displaced populations and the prevention and suppression of sexual violence. The Conference has entered into its implementation phase and has established its secretariat in Bujumbura.

13. The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa provided technical advice to AU on the establishment and functioning of its Small Arms Unit and other disarmament issues. In 2007, the Centre contributed to the establishment of the AU border programme, in particular as it relates to the border control of the flow of small arms and light weapons and the promulgation of efficient national legislation and disarmament programmes. The Centre participated in three workshops of experts organized by AU on the implementation of the programme in Addis Ababa, Bamako and Djibouti. In cooperation with the Security Council Committee established under resolution 1540 (2004) and AU, the Office of Disarmament Affairs of the Secretariat organized an African regional workshop on the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) in Gaborone.

14. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa supported the AU Department of Peace and Security and Conflict Management Division. It was actively engaged in the second consultative meeting on the AU's post-conflict reconstruction and development policy, held in Zambia in July 2007, and assisted in the organization of the seminar by the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa of the Security Council on using early warning information for conflict prevention. As the seminar called for more creative and ambitious efforts by the Council to prevent conflict, the Working Group recognized the importance of adopting a comprehensive approach in order to achieve long-term solutions to the serious crises that have an impact on stability in Africa. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa also cooperated with the New Partnership for Africa's Development under the regional consultation mechanism of United Nations system agencies, in particular with respect to the advocacy and communication cluster. In November 2007, the Office hosted a meeting of experts, which reviewed the progress of the AU's subprogramme of the African Peer Review Mechanism.

15. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) provided substantive support to AU for its ministerial meeting on negotiations of economic partnership agreements and prepared a technical note on developments and issues related to such agreements in the light of the Doha negotiations. AU participated in a workshop on issues related to investments, competition and government procurement in the economic partnership agreements in Brussels in July 2007. UNCTAD also contributed substantively to the AU Conference of Ministers of Trade, held in Nairobi in April 2006, and provided technical support to efforts for the development of new commodity exchanges and the development of a concept and implementation plan of the Pan-African Commodity and Derivatives Exchange.

16. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and AU revised and updated their 1991 cooperation agreement (signed by the former Organization of African Unity). Cooperation has been enhanced with the establishment of the UNEP Liaison Office in Addis Ababa, which serves as a conduit for the exchange of information. UNEP and AU have been participating in each other's statutory meetings and have been working jointly to support ministerial forums, specific regional projects and processes, in particular the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment. Efforts focused on the implementation of the Action Plan of the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development with the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment guiding the process. UNEP continues to work at the subregional level to ensure the finalization, adoption and implementation of similar action plans. UNEP and the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment are preparing a comprehensive and integrated Africa Environment Outlook report. The outlook process incorporates the Africa Environment Information Network and early warning activities. UNEP also cooperated with other environment-related forums and provided technical and financial support, including to the African Ministers' Council on Water and the Forum of Energy Ministers of Africa.

17. In 2006, AU began to develop an appropriate legal framework for protection of and assistance to internally displaced persons to which the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is currently providing technical support and advice. Once adopted, the new convention would be the first international treaty on internally displaced persons. UNHCR and AU have increasingly and jointly advocated their cause and mobilized international resources.

AU has become a donor to UNHCR's programmes in Africa, providing funds for operations in Chad in 2006 and in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone in 2007. UNHCR is supporting preparations for a special AU Summit of Heads of State and Government in November 2008 aimed at addressing forced displacement issues in Africa. The Summit was called for in the Declaration of the AU Ministerial Meeting on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, adopted in Ouagadougou in June 2006.

18. The strategic support of the United Nations Children's Fund's (UNICEF) to AU has evolved around advocacy and capacity development of key actors to accelerate child survival and development efforts. In 2006 and 2007, UNICEF supported the African Development Forum on Youth Leadership and the Second Pan-African Forum on Children, which reviewed the implementation of the 2001 Declaration and Plan of Action on Africa Fit for Children. A new Call for Accelerated Action on the Implementation of the Plan of Action towards Africa Fit for Children (2008-2012) was adopted by the Second Pan-African Forum and brought to the attention of the General Assembly in 2007. The new call is focused on five indispensable obligations: enhancing life chances, overcoming HIV/AIDS, advancing education, child protection and the participation of children and young persons.

19. Cooperation between the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and AU is based on established framework agreements. In June 2006, UNIDO transferred the responsibility for organizing the Conference of African Ministers of Industry to AU. Subsequently, AU organized the Extraordinary Session of the Conference of Ministers of Industry in September 2007 with the technical support of UNIDO. UNIDO and AU presented a joint paper on energy security. During spring 2007, a number of expert group meetings were jointly organized on issues of particular interest to Africa: decent and productive work for youth with emphasis on the Mano River Union; investment for Africa's productive capacity; and bio-fuels. In May 2008, UNIDO and AU organized the International Conference on Renewable Energy in Dakar. These meetings have resulted in the development of multi-stakeholder programmes and projects for implementation by AU.

20. The 10th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government was held in Addis Ababa in January 2008. It approved an Action Plan for Accelerated Industrial Development of Africa. UNIDO and AU have taken steps to rationalize and prioritize aspects of the Action Plan with a view to developing an implementation strategy. They have cooperated in the field of agricultural mechanization and are in the process of finalizing a paper on the subject for the forthcoming AU ministerial meeting.

21. In May 2007, at the request of ECA, UNIDO convened a meeting of United Nations entities working in the area of industry, trade and market access. The primary objective was to provide coordinated support to AU, the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the regional economic communities, including for building or enhancing their capacities for programme implementation. A workplan for 2008 has been developed and a multi-stakeholder workshop will be held in 2008. UNIDO and other United Nations bodies are actively engaged in coordinating their input for Africa's science and technology development. In view of the limited capacity of AU and the New Partnership to engage outside partners, the United Nations system continues to support the development of an African system for

science and technology indicators, the development of science and technology parks and efforts in the areas of energy, water and desertification. The New Partnership has requested assistance in the development of studies aimed at procuring evidence-based advice.

22. The World Food Programme (WFP) and AU cooperate within the framework of an agreement signed in 2007. As stipulated in the agreement, WFP provides support in 13 areas, including humanitarian affairs, emergency preparedness, post-conflict recovery, education and training, health and hygiene, HIV/AIDS, nutrition and food security, agriculture, gender and development, protection of children and the family, and the fight against hunger and poverty.

B. Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization

23. The cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO) has developed within the framework of mutual representation at each other's meetings and the exchange of information and documentation. Consultations were regularly conducted on matters of common interest, including between the Legal Counsel of the United Nations and the AALCO Secretary-General. Cooperation in the area of international law includes, inter alia, matters relating to the law of the sea, international trade law, international environmental law, criminal law, human rights law, refugee law, humanitarian law, terrorism, human trafficking and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

24. AALCO was represented at the sixty-first and sixty-second sessions of the General Assembly and the fifty-ninth session of the International Law Commission; the joint Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)/Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) Ministerial Conference on Trafficking in Persons, supported by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in Abuja in July 2006; the tenth anniversary of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea in Hamburg in 2006; the workshop on the role of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea in the settlement of disputes relating to the law of the sea in the Gulf area, held in Bahrain in February 2008; and the sixtieth anniversary commemoration of the International Law Commission in Geneva in May 2008. Representatives of various United Nations bodies participated in the forty-sixth session of AALCO in Cape Town in July 2007.

25. In keeping with regular practice, the AALCO secretariat prepared notes and comments on the sixty-first and sixty-second sessions of the General Assembly, in particular items under consideration by the Sixth Committee, for consideration by its member States. The annual meetings of legal advisers of AALCO member states were held in New York on 30 October 2006 and 5 November 2007, respectively. The 2006 meeting focused on international migration and development, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and combating corruption. The 2007 meeting addressed 25 years of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the contribution of AALCO, the responsibility of States for internationally wrongful acts and the International Criminal Court. A joint AALCO/International Law Commission meeting followed each of the meetings.

26. AALCO and the International Criminal Court concluded a memorandum of understanding on 5 February 2008, agreeing, inter alia, to promote awareness of international criminal law. Negotiations for cooperation agreements are under way

with the Economic Cooperation Organization and the International Tropical Timber Organization.

27. An intersessional meeting of experts on emerging issues on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea was held in New Delhi on 5 November 2007. A judge from the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea made a presentation at the meeting, which discussed the Convention, the ocean regime and contributions to it by African and Asian States, preservation and protection of the marine environment, and maritime zones and their delimitation.

28. The AALCO Centre for Research and Training is at present engaged in capacity-building by carrying out research projects on international law and working to establish training programmes on international law matters for officials from AALCO member States.

29. To promote international arbitration, AALCO, with the close cooperation of its member Governments, has established four regional centres for arbitration, in Cairo, Kuala Lumpur, Lagos and Tehran. The Secretary-General of AALCO and the Attorney-General of Kenya have signed an agreement for the establishment of the fifth regional centre, in Nairobi.

C. Association of Southeast Asian Nations

30. The year 2007 marked a historic moment for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as it undertook the first specific step towards realizing the ASEAN Community envisaged in the Vientiane Action Programme of 2004. At its 13th summit, in Singapore, 10 Heads of State signed the ASEAN Charter, serving as the constitutional framework for community-building. The Charter enshrines strong democratic principles and includes a provision on the establishment of a human rights body as a new organ of ASEAN. Six member States have ratified the Charter. ASEAN plans to establish a commission for the promotion and protection of the rights of women and children for which the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and UNICEF are providing expert advice. The United Nations welcomed the adoption of the ASEAN Charter.

31. In 2006, the General Assembly granted observer status to ASEAN and, in turn, the United Nations was accorded full dialogue partner status with ASEAN. On the occasion of the annual ASEAN/United Nations ministerial meeting in New York in 2007, the two Secretaries-General signed a memorandum of understanding, which provides the basis for close cooperation on matters of mutual interest, including in the political, economic and socio-cultural areas. The establishment of the Tripartite Core Group, consisting of representatives of the Government of Myanmar, ASEAN and the United Nations, to support international humanitarian relief efforts to Myanmar in the aftermath of cyclone Nargis, has been one tangible example of the new, mutually beneficial partnership.

32. System-wide cooperation with ASEAN has continued and evolved in several specific areas. The UNDP Partnership Facility supported analysis and dialogue on issues related to deepening regional integration. Subsequently, UNDP has been working directly with ASEAN members with special attention to Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Viet Nam. WFP and ASEAN have also strengthened their partnership, specifically in the wake of their collaboration

following the tsunami disaster in 2005. The partnership has focused on meeting humanitarian commitments, cooperating for development and improving disaster preparedness and response.

D. Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization

33. Cooperation between the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC) has been particularly fruitful in the field of transport. ECE contributed to the coordinated development of transport infrastructure and facilitation in the BSEC region through the development of the Euro-Asian transport links project. It identified the main Euro-Asian inland transport routes in 18 countries, 10 of which are BSEC members, analysed the major physical and non-physical obstacles along those routes and evaluated and prioritized transport infrastructure projects. In close cooperation with the BSEC Working Group on Transport, a large amount of data on major Black Sea and Mediterranean ports has been collected and processed, which helped to further develop the project for 2008-2011. ECE has continued to participate in regular high-level consultations and BSEC meetings, including the Summit of Heads of State and Government in Istanbul in June 2007. Future cooperation is focused on implementing the Black Sea Ring Highway and the Motorways of the Sea through joint capacity-building and investment planning workshops. Possibilities are being explored to develop joint activities in the field of trade and the liberalization of the multilateral quota system within BSEC, and in expanding cooperation with associated institutions, in particular the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank.

34. Since November 2006, UNDP and BSEC have been implementing the three-year joint Black Sea Trade and Investment Promotion Programme and have explored new potential areas of future cooperation. BSEC has been hosting a UNDP representative, who regularly participates in the meetings of working groups and the BSEC Project Development Fund. A cooperation agreement between UNDP and BSEC was signed on 28 June 2007. According to the first progress report for the period from May to August 2007, the project produced tangible results. In February 2008, UNDP presented a proposal to the Steering Committee of the Project Development Fund to attract official development assistance from donors.

35. UNICEF's Executive Director participated, on behalf of the Secretary-General, in the BSEC Summit in 2007. A subsequent meeting between the Secretary-General of BSEC and the UNICEF Regional Director for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States has opened new opportunities for closer collaboration in areas such as combating child trafficking and the monitoring of the situation of children through the DevInfo and regional Millennium Development Goal databases. Since November 2006, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and BSEC have been implementing a joint project on strengthening the criminal justice response to trafficking in persons in the Black Sea region. In October 2007, a Joint Conference on Trafficking in Human Beings in the Black Sea Region was organized by UNODC, the International Centre for Migration Policy Development and BSEC.

36. Because of lack of funds, UNIDO and BSEC were only partly successful in establishing an investment and technology promotion office network in the BSEC region. Cooperation on energy and the environment has been developed with the

UNIDO International Centre for Hydrogen Energy Technologies. Representatives of the Centre participated in the meetings of relevant BSEC working groups. The Centre also decided to co-fund a project on hydrogen production.

37. The BSEC Secretary-General and the Deputy Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) met in Geneva in February 2007 to explore possibilities of developing their cooperation. Prospects for continued World Bank/BSEC cooperation were explored by the Bank's Director for South-East Europe, who attended the BSEC Summit in 2007.

E. Caribbean Community

38. In a message to the 28th meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), held in Bridgetown in July 2007, the Secretary-General welcomed regional integration processes as a boost to sustainable development and economic growth. He also highlighted the progress made in United Nations/CARICOM efforts aimed at strengthening peace, development and human rights and in relation to a variety of issues of particular interest to the region, such as the threat of organized crime, the effects of drug trafficking and global warming. He encouraged regional integration as a way to assist Caribbean countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, fully and on time.

39. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs has been supporting CARICOM under a joint programme for advancing the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. In cooperation with the Governments of Barbados and Iceland, the Department organized a High-level Round Table on International Cooperation for Sustainable Development in Caribbean Small Island Developing States, in Bridgetown in March 2008. The meeting explored possibilities for the development of new international partnerships, in particular in the area of renewable energy and sustainable fisheries. In 2007, the Department's Statistics Division signed a memorandum of understanding with CARICOM on the compilation and exchange of national accounts statistics.

40. The Department of Political Affairs was instrumental in preparing and organizing the United Nations system's participation in the fourth general meeting of representatives of the United Nations and of CARICOM and its associated institutions, at Turkeyen, Guyana, in January 2007. A record 20 United Nations bodies participated in the delegation led by the Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development. Participants adopted a joint statement which was issued as a document of both the General Assembly and the Security Council (A/61/833-S/2007/179, annex) and CARICOM circulated the report of the meeting to all participants. Consultations are ongoing in preparation of the fifth general meeting, to be held in New York in January 2009.

41. The Department of Political Affairs initiated a number of consultations aimed at improving bilateral cooperation and the flow of information between its officials and the Office of the Assistant Secretary-General for Foreign and Community Relations of CARICOM. On 13 March 2008, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs of the United Nations met permanent representatives and other officials of the CARICOM Caucus to discuss the Secretary-General's proposals to strengthen the Department. The Department cooperates with other United Nations

entities in trust-building and police reform efforts in Antigua and Barbuda and in Guyana. A joint UNODC/Department of Political Affairs delegation participated in the presentation of the report on crime, violence and development: trends, cost and policy options in t he Caribbean to the fifth meeting of the Council of National Security and Law Enforcement, held in Port-of-Spain in April 2008.

42. In March 2008, the Department of Public Information and CARICOM organized a series of events in observance of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. These included a commemorative meeting, a press conference, a live video conference for high-school students in seven countries and a briefing for NGOs followed by a documentary screening and a panel discussion.

43. The Office for Disarmament Affairs of the Secretariat and CARICOM have been promoting the universality and implementation of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects and its Protocols. CARICOM representatives participated in a number of seminars and disarmament workshops organized by the Office, including on the implementation of the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, in Guatemala in May 2006; on Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) concerning the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, in Peru in November 2006 and in Jamaica in May 2007; and on the Conventional Weapons Convention and its Protocols in the Dominican Republic in March 2008.

44. In Saint Lucia in November 2006, UNCTAD participated in a regional workshop for CARICOM on investigating consumer complaints. UNCTAD provided assistance to a number of Eastern Caribbean States in implementing the CARICOM competition rules. Assistance relating to the review and finalization of those rules was provided during a regional meeting of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States.

45. UNEP supported the implementation of environmental and sustainable development programmes for CARICOM, in particular its Council for Trade and Economic Development. UNEP organized a consultation with Caribbean small island developing States for policy discussions at the ministerial level as part of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean in January 2008. At the technical and operational level, UNEP worked very closely with CARICOM 's Sustainable Development Unit, the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute in Saint Lucia, the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre in Belize, the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency and the Caribbean Court of Justice in Trinidad and Tobago.

46. UNEP has been instrumental in building South-South linkages between Caribbean small island developing States. It has collaborated closely with CARICOM in the assessment of the implications for adaptation to climate change in those States, which will guide the future UNEP programme on climate change in the region. UNEP provided technical support for the CARICOM feasibility study for the establishment of a regional sustainability fund and coordinated action on policy-related issues with respect to the implementation of multilateral environment agreements among CARICOM member States. Together with the CARICOM

Sustainable Development Unit, UNEP is implementing the Caribbean component of a European Union-funded project on capacity-building related to multilateral environment agreements. UNEP also works on the formulation of a programme aimed at strengthening access to environmental justice and a proposal for a Caribbean revolving fund for wastewater management.

47. UNICEF supported CARICOM in the organization of the second special ministerial meeting on children held in Guyana in March 2008. The meeting reviewed progress towards the targets of the Regional Framework of Action for Children. The ministers adopted the Georgetown Declaration on Building a Region Fit for Children, which aims at the holistic development, protection and participation of children. To better understand the increased levels of drop-out of boys from education, UNICEF and CARICOM organized a regional workshop on the education of boys in the Caribbean. UNICEF also participated in a situation analysis of adolescents and youths, with a particular focus on 10- to 14-year-old children, for consideration by the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM. Collaboration continued in the areas of early childhood development with a focus on regulatory frameworks and the accreditation of caregivers and of child protection with a focus on legislative reform and children without parental care.

48. UNIDO initiated a joint dialogue with CARICOM on trade capacity-building programmes related to quality improvement, the development of a single market and economy as well as agro-industry improvement, within its Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean. Proposals for technical cooperation have remained part of a closer overall partnership effort for the design and implementation of industrial technical assistance programmes in common focus areas. Later in 2008, UNIDO and CARICOM plan to hold a joint workshop to develop a subregional programme in those areas. CARICOM requested UNIDO to draw up a regional programme in support of the development of creative industries, in particular building institutional capacity in business support services related to product development, packaging, marketing and market intelligence, and supporting the establishment of business associations.

49. The UNIDO Private Sector Development Branch drafted a project proposal on institutional capacity-building and regional networking to promote creative industries in the Caribbean. The project will address problems that affect micro, small and medium enterprises, directly related to their size and isolation from other enterprises as well as their institutional environment. Clustering and networking would help solving common problems that they would not be able to address alone, such as packaging, branding and access to export markets. UNIDO is actively seeking funding for the project.

50. In 2006, UNFPA and CARICOM agreed to build capacity for South-South cooperation, in particular among its member States. UNFPA supported the development of an overall framework for cooperation, including advocacy interventions with member States to discuss and adopt the South-South cooperation vision, the design and launch of a roster of Caribbean experts and the conduct of a study tour to ASEAN. In 2007, the South-South initiative became the overall framework in which UNFPA and CARICOM approach their collaboration, including UNFPA chairing the Health and Family Life Subcommittee of the Out of School Youth and Resources Consortium, funded by the Department for International

Development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and set up in support of the 2010 round of censuses.

51. UNFPA has supported advocacy training for CARICOM youth ambassadors on sexual reproductive health rights and media advocacy, including rights of people living with HIV/AIDS, and on needs assessment and behaviour-change communication capacity-building for key government focal points with responsibility for message development. It provided technical assistance to the CARICOM Council for Human and Social Development to facilitate the adoption of a Caribbean position on a new target on universal access to reproductive health as a necessary condition to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, in particular goal 5, improving maternal health.

52. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and CARICOM continue to implement the 2000 Caribbean small island developing States project, which has focused on improving telecommunication systems at the national and regional level; rehabilitating and upgrading the observing network; renovating the regional laboratory for the calibration and maintenance of instruments; upgrading the database management systems; implementing data rescue programmes; and providing training activities and awareness-building campaigns. Under the project, some 29 automatic weather stations were installed in 12 Caribbean countries with a view to rehabilitating and upgrading observing networks. Specialized training in the new climate data management system (CLIDATA) software for administrators was provided.

F. Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries

53. Since 2006, the Government of Brazil and WFP spearheaded efforts to provide capacity development assistance for school feeding programmes in lusophone African countries. Senior officials from the Ministry of Education of Brazil and WFP met several times with high-level government officials in Angola, Cape Verde and Mozambique to identify needs and opportunities for such technical assistance, and Brazil donated $1 million United States dollars in December 2007 to a WFP trust fund to strengthen current activities and to expand the scope of the initiative.

54. In May 2006, the Second Lusophone Conference was organized by UNCTAD in cooperation with the Portuguese Competition Authority in Lisbon and with the participation of representatives of eight Portuguese-speaking countries. The meeting represented a follow-up on the Rio de Janeiro Declaration, adopted at the First Lusophone Conference in June 2004. It took stock of progress made in the area of competition policy by Portuguese-speaking countries and discussed developments in specific economic sectors and the institutional framework for competition law implementation, as well as relevant case studies.

55. The Portuguese Radio Unit of the Department of Public Information has established a cooperation arrangement with the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries. It currently broadcasts news bulletins on a daily basis and weekly magazine programmes, reaching a worldwide audience of more than 230 million Portuguese-speaking people, by means of 21 networks that bring together approximately 1,500 radio stations.

G. Council of Europe

56. Cooperation between the United Nations system and the Council of Europe encompasses direct contacts at all levels. The United Nations, together with the Council and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), held a high-level tripartite meeting under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France, in July 2008, which addressed the theme of intercultural dialogue. The meeting was organized in close cooperation with the Alliance of Civilizations. Negotiations are under way between the Alliance and the Council to identify specific areas of future collaboration. The Council nominated European youth representatives to the First Alliance of Civilizations Forum, held in Madrid in January 2008.

57. In January 2007, the Executive Director of UNICEF and the Secretary-General of the Council signed a declaration on the reinforcement of cooperation in the area of child protection, providing a framework for the joint promotion of children 's rights and the protection of all children living in Europe. The Executive Director also addressed the Council 's Parliamentary Assembly on child victims: stamping out all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse, which has been part of the Council 's three-year programme entitled Building a Europe for and with Children. UNICEF also shared key findings and conclusions on juvenile justice at the 28th Conference of European Ministers of Justice.

58. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs cooperated with the Council, in particular in the area of violence against women. The Department attended the launch of the Council 's Campaign to Combat Violence against Women, including Domestic Violence, in Madrid in November 2006, and a seminar on men 's active participation in combating domestic violence, held in Zagreb in May 2007. Representatives of the Council participated in an expert group meeting on indicators to measure violence against women, held in Geneva in October 2007. Representatives of the Council regularly attended sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women.

59. In 2006 and 2007, under the Joint UNHCR/Council of Europe Assistance Programme, seminars and workshops were held in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Montenegro, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. UNHCR continued to implement the memorandum of understanding with the Council 's Development Bank, which made €3 million available to UNHCR for projects aimed at finding durable solutions for the most vulnerable refugees and internally displaced populations in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Serbia. The two organizations cooperated in organizing the seminar in December 2006 on being a young refugee in Europe today, with a follow-up event in February 2008; the Lanzarote Conference of European Ministers of Justice on access to justice for vulnerable groups, in particular migrants, asylum seekers and children; and the Belgrade Conference on Durable Solutions for Roma Refugees, Internally Displaced Populations and Returnees in the Balkans, both held in October 2007.

60. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is collaborating with the Council of Europe and others to promote human rights education in primary and secondary school systems, in line with the plan of action for the first phase (2005-2009) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education. Together with counterparts in the Council, OSCE and the United Nations

Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), OHCHR is developing a compendium of good practices from Europe and Central Asia. As part of that initiative, a regional meeting on the World Programme was organized in Strasbourg in November 2007, gathering more than 100 participants from ministries of education, teacher training institutions, NGOs, national human rights institutions and other relevant actors.

H. Economic Cooperation Organization

61. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs provided capacity-building assistance to the secretariat of ECO to aid its efforts in designing and implementing national sustainable development strategies within member countries. In Tehran in November 2007, the Department, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Statistical Centre of Iran organized a workshop on integrated economic statistics and the informal sector for member countries, in collaboration with ECO.

62. ESCAP and UNCTAD have been working with ECO to advance multimodal transport and trade facilitation in the ECO region, including the Asian Highway Network and Trans-Asian Railway Network, and the implementation of the ECO Transit Transport Framework Agreement. They have provided technical assistance for projects, executed by ECO and financially supported by the Islamic Development Bank. ESCAP participated in the first meeting of the heads of national statistical offices organized by ECO and the Statistical Centre of Iran, which adopted the ECO Framework of Cooperation and Plan of Action in Statistics. Both identify the priority areas for cooperation, provide a road map for future initiatives and establish a network of national statistical offices in member countries.

63. UNCTAD contributed to five national studies on multimodal transport issues in Azerbaijan, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Pakistan and Turkey. A consolidated report on the major findings of the national studies was prepared, including recommendations for multimodal transport for the region. Areas for joint action between UNCTAD and ECO were identified at the second workshop on multimodal transport and trade facilitation, on the theme "Measuring trade and transport facilitation instruments for development". Held in Tehran in June 2007, the workshop focused on the preparation of a plan of action to help ECO countries overcome the physical and non-physical impediments to regional and international trade. In June and September 2007, UNCTAD participated in meetings in Azerbaijan and Iran (Islamic Republic of) on transit issues and international multimodal transport operations in Central Asia. The latter meeting dealt in particular with challenges linked to the implementation of the Transit Transport Framework Agreement, drafted under the auspices of ECO.

64. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) formulated an expanded regional programme for food security for ECO countries, building on its regional project to strengthen seed supply in the ECO region. The regional programme, budgeted at $64.8 million, includes such components as combating transboundary animal diseases, research on wheat improvement, development and maintenance of pastures, and natural disaster risk management. The proposal for the regional programme was considered at a donor meeting held in Turkey in May 2008.

65. UNEP continued to assist ECO countries in strengthening environmental policies, sustainable development, partnerships and studies, and capacity-building. UNEP is supporting Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan through the Interstate Sustainable Development Commission in the development of a framework convention on the preservation of the environment for sustainable development in Central Asia; the establishment of a regional mountain centre; and promoting civil society participation in addressing environmental issues, especially through the Interstate Sustainable Development Commission public council and the Central Asia youth environment network. UNEP also provides capacity-building assistance for data collection and distribution, reporting and the development of regional and national sustainable development strategies.

66. In December 2007, UNIDO and ECO organized an expert group meeting on trade capacity-building. More than 50 participants from Governments, research institutions, standards bodies, regional organizations and international agencies discussed trade and standards compliance. The discussions aimed at enhancing knowledge-sharing, developing a strategy for cooperation and identifying needs and priorities, including for UNIDO technical assistance projects. The participants also discussed frameworks for accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO), the integration with world markets in the context of standards compliance and proposed to carry out a needs assessment of ECO member States with respect to standards, metrology, testing and infrastructure. UNIDO and ECO are collaborating in resource mobilization and implementation for the project. In mid-2008, UNIDO organized a regional workshop on technology transfer and acquisition for ECO countries in Iran (Islamic Republic of).

I. Eurasian Economic Community

67. In May 2007, a memorandum of understanding was signed between ECE, ESCAP and the Eurasian Economic Community (EEC) aimed at promoting effective interaction, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and activities in the framework of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia. In January 2007, ECE and the EEC Inter-Parliamentary Assembly signed a cooperation agreement to harmonize draft legislation developed under the aegis of the Assembly with relevant ECE legal instruments. Technical cooperation focused on trade, water and energy resources and transport. In October 2006, ECE, ESCAP and EEC organized a meeting on trade facilitation, import and export clearance, data harmonization and the ECE International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods. In June and October 2007, a seminar on integrated approaches to trade facilitation and public-private partnerships in Central Asia and a regional conference on trade facilitation were held.

68. ECE and ESCAP worked with the EEC Integration Committee in the field of water and energy resources to implement recommendations contained in the regional cooperation strategy, as well as measures developed in the joint ECE/ESCAP project on rational and efficient use of energy and water resources in Central Asia, financed from the United Nations Development Account. In 2008, the EEC secretariat invited ECE and ESCAP to contribute to the development of a concept for effective use of water and energy resources in Central Asia and to assist in mobilizing international experts in support of that work. They also carried out a project on capacity-building for cooperation on dam safety in Central Asia. The

EEC High-level Group on Water-Energy Issues developed a model national law and regional cooperation agreement for dam safety in Central Asia. The EEC Inter-Parliamentary Assembly approved the model law in April 2008. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs supported the participation of experts from Central Asian countries in an international conference on water-related disaster risk reduction in Tajikistan in June 2008.

69. In April 2008, UNIDO was requested by Belarus to develop a regional project to establish a unified network for technology transfer. The International Development Association and EEC signed an agreement in support of activities aimed at fighting HIV/AIDS in Central Asia, which went into force in August 2007. It reflects the integration of documents of the former Organization of Central Asian Cooperation into the normative EEC framework. EEC participated in the working group on transport and border crossing in the framework of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia. In Dushanbe in October 2007, the EEC Interstate Council adopted a resolution recommending that all EEC countries accede to the 25 international ECE transport agreements and conventions concluded in 2007 and 2008.

70. In September 2006, UNDP and EEC signed a memorandum of understanding. They jointly developed a web portal on migration, trade, transport and investment issues on the UNDP Central Asian Gateway Internet platform. UNDP is exploring approaches to assist EEC countries with addressing uranium tailings in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, including by mobilizing support from international financial institutions. UNDP was invited to assist in defining the concept for the effective use of water and energy resources in Central Asia. In October 2007, UNDP called for a seminar of regional organizations active in Central Asia, which agreed to establish a regular exchange of communication, participate in each others' meetings as observers, facilitate cross-participation in relevant working groups and explore cooperation in programmatic areas.

J. International Organization of la Francophonie

71. Following a meeting between the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie (IOF) in New York in March 2008, both Organizations held a series of consultations at the working level in Paris in April. Representatives of some 40 international organizations and institutions, 4 member States and 2 NGOs exchanged views and experience, took stock of progress made and explored ways to further strengthen international partnerships in early warning and conflict prevention, focusing on practical and operational approaches. IOF contributed to international efforts aimed at resolving the political crisis in the Comoros' Anjuan Island and supported peacebuilding efforts related to Burundi, the Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau.

72. United Nations/IOF cooperation has improved significantly in the area of peacekeeping, in particular in the implementation of Security Council resolution 1778 (2007) on Chad. Both the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and IOF have strengthened the capabilities of IOF members to efficiently participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations. United Nations/IOF cooperation has also contributed to the signing of a comprehensive peace agreement between the Government of the Central African Republic and two of the country's major

political-military groups in Libreville on 21 June 2008, which had been facilitated by the President of the Gabonese Republic. Both organizations have since been promoting a process of national reconciliation through an inclusive political dialogue. The Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs has engaged in consultations with IOF on the modalities of a possible collaboration in relation to the electoral process in Côte d'Ivoire.

73. In collaboration with IOF and ECA, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs organized a regional policy training workshop in Addis Ababa in June 2006, which addressed priority concerns of youth development in Africa. The Department and IOF continued to promote the development and implementation of national sustainable development strategies among French-speaking developing countries. IOF monitored the sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development and held side events, including a learning centre course in May 2008, which focused on the peer review approach of those strategies. IOF and UNIDO continued their regular exchange of information about issues and programmes of mutual interest.

74. In September 2007, IOF and OHCHR signed a joint three-year programme of cooperation, focusing on the implementation of major international human rights instruments, conflict prevention and settlement, the fight against discrimination and the promotion of diversity. Both organizations committed to finance the implementation of activities in each of the areas, according to a timetable set out in a joint road map. OHCHR also organized several workshops and activities with financial support and expertise from IOF. The workshops followed up on the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the role of national human rights institutions in the West Africa region in the protection of refugees, internally displaced and stateless persons and techniques of monitoring and investigating human rights violations. On 17 October 2007, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the IOF Secretary-General issued a joint declaration on the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. In November and December 2007, IOF and OHCHR organized several information sessions for French-speaking permanent missions to the United Nations in Geneva on the Universal Human Rights Index and its utilization.

K. League of Arab States

75. The United Nations has been giving priority to the strengthening of the capacity of the League of Arab States (LAS) in conflict prevention and resolution, early warning, electoral assistance, disarmament and peacebuilding. The most recent general meeting between representatives of the United Nations system and LAS was held in Geneva from 1 to 3 July 2008. It discussed a number of political issues and developed joint projects in economic, environmental, social, humanitarian, cultural, technical, capacity-building and other fields. Participants agreed on a mechanism to follow up on United Nations/LAS decisions, thus strengthening institutional linkages between the secretariats. The follow-up mechanism and regular contacts are bound to facilitate an exchange of expertise and lessons learned and to advance joint conflict-prevention efforts.

76. The Secretary-General strongly supported the LAS initiative and proposals to solve the political crisis in Lebanon. Cooperation on Iraq focused primarily on the establishment and functioning of the expanded regional dialogue process launched

in Sharm el-Sheikh in May 2007. It continued through activities of the three working groups dealing with security, refugees and energy, and regular ministerial meetings held in Istanbul and Kuwait. The United Nations worked closely with LAS on the launch and implementation of the International Compact with Iraq.

77. The cooperation included a number of joint projects, including in the fields of trade, investment and finance, agriculture and water, environment and sustainable development, industry and technology, education and culture, population policies and youth empowerment, human settlements and health, and the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. UNIDO, for example, collaborated actively with the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization and the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization in helping its members achieve a sustainable level of industrial development. In the environmental sphere, projects include the implementation of the sustainable development initiative in the Arab region and activities to implement decisions of the UNEP Governing Council and the Global Ministerial Environment Forum. WMO worked closely with the LAS Arab Centre for the Study of Arid Zones and Dry Lands in developing a primary regional vision on action strategy policies of climate change.

78. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs has cooperated with LAS in the implementation of the capacity-building project entitled "Assessing development strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in the Arab region". Along with LAS and the UNEP Regional Office for West Asia, the Department contributed to the organization of a regional meeting on sustainable consumption and production in Abu Dhabi in March 2008.

79. In January 2008, LAS and UNHCR launched a campaign to raise awareness about and funds for Iraqi refugees. The contributions of UNHCR to the campaign included technical and audio-visual support. Regionally, UNICEF has also been actively engaged in training and conducting studies on the health and well-being of children. A cluster survey was completed in nine countries resulting in the updating of critical socio-economic statistics. A proposed regional study on child poverty is under discussion.

80. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) collaborated closely with LAS to address the region's development needs and promote regional dialogue and coordination. It encompassed most of the priority areas of work of the Commission. In November 2007 the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States and LAS organized a forum on the theme "Youth and the Millennium Development Goals: vision, localizing and achievement" and in December 2007 the regional launch of the *Human Development Report 2007/2008*: *Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity — a Divided World*.

81. LAS helped WFP to engage Arab States as donors by endorsing and supporting its activities in the region. WFP recently gave public information support to an LAS fund-raising event for displaced Iraqis in neighbouring Arab countries. The Alliance of Civilizations has signed a memorandum of understanding with LAS, which defines areas of collaboration, including supporting initiatives related to human rights and tolerance, exchanging good practices in the framework of migration or tourism, creating opportunities for urban intercultural dialogue and city diplomacy, and developing programmes and campaigns for youth exchanges.

L. Organization of the Islamic Conference

82. The United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) have been enhancing practical cooperation and building complementarity. The Secretaries-General of both Organizations have met regularly and consultations involving the Special Adviser for the International Compact with Iraq and Other Political Issues in March 2007 and the High-level Coordinator for the return of Kuwaiti and third-country nationals in June 2008 have further enhanced cooperation. Consultations focused, inter alia, on the situation in the Middle East, Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia, and ways to achieve a peaceful settlement in Darfur/Sudan, as well as conflict prevention, peacebuilding and the fight against terrorism.

83. To make full use of the role that regional organizations could play in countering terrorism, the Department of Political Affairs and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), in cooperation with the Government of Tunisia, organized an International Conference on Terrorism: Dimensions, Threats and Countermeasures in November 2007. In addition to holding a fruitful exchange of views, participants dispersed misapprehensions about Islam, identified vulnerable areas exploited by terrorists in the social, cultural, ethical and ideological spheres, and recommended solutions that would make those areas less conducive to use by extremists.

84. Representatives of the United Nations system and OIC and its specialized institutions met in Geneva from 8 to 10 July 2008. They reviewed and appraised the level of cooperation in the fields of science and technology, trade and development, implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, protection of and assistance to refugees, human resource development, food security and agriculture, environment, health and population, arts and crafts, and the promotion of heritage. Participants agreed to improve the follow-up mechanism by identifying focal points within the secretariats and exchanging lists of officials dealing with particular issues of interest to both organizations. The Department of Political Affairs, OIC and ISESCO agreed to cooperate on follow-up to the Tunis conference. The Department of Political Affairs briefed OIC on its proposal to strengthen the Department, which would improve its capacity and ability to cooperate more closely with OIC and its members, expand relations and implement the recommendations of the general and sectoral meetings.

85. UNICEF has been exploring ways to further develop and formalize its partnership with OIC. Ongoing discussions include specific initiatives linked to the Millennium Development Goals as part of the OIC Ten-Year Programme of Action to Meet the Challenges Facing the Muslim Ummah in the Twenty-first Century.

86. ESCWA has continued its cooperation in the field of statistics with the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries, an OIC subsidiary body, through the organization of joint workshops, in particular on the development of the capacity of countries to comply with the Millennium Development Goal indicators, and in statistical analysis. In November 2007, WFP welcomed the first-ever contribution from OIC in support of WFP work in Benin, Somalia and Yemen.

87. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat has been developing a dialogue with OIC in an effort to reach out to NGOs and other

humanitarian actors in Islamic countries. In 2007, the Office strengthened its engagement through participation in joint activities and events such as the food conference in the Niger, the regular provision of in-depth briefings of its work to OIC officials and information-sharing.

88. The Alliance of Civilizations signed a memorandum of understanding with ISESCO according to which they will work together to provide models for cultural exchange, identify universities in Arab countries for the Alliance's Global University Network, train youth leaders and NGOs on human rights education and intercultural learning, and collaborate on the Alliance's Rapid Response Media Mechanism project. The Alliance is currently collaborating with ISESCO in organizing and developing themes for a conference on education for intercultural understanding, to be held in Copenhagen in October 2008.

89. WMO and OIC have jointly organized short training courses on natural disaster mitigation to build awareness of natural disasters, especially in collaboration with the Islamic University of Technology and the Bangladesh Meteorological Department. A joint ISESCO/OHCHR workshop on human rights education in the primary and secondary school system was held in Yaoundé in May 2008.

M. Pacific Islands Forum

90. The United Nations accepted observer status at the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) in December 2006. It continues to partner with PIF and other regional intergovernmental agencies in delivering a range of services across the pillars of the Pacific Plan: economic growth, sustainable development, good governance, rule of law and security.

91. In 2007, UNDP continued to assist the Pacific Plan Office in drawing up a monitoring and evaluation strategy through a web-enabled database. UNDP has also worked with PIF and ESCAP to develop a joint work programme to support the integration of the Millennium Development Goals into national development strategies. Under the auspices of the Pacific Disaster Risk Management Partnership Network, UNDP provided support to the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission and to PIF to develop national action plans for disaster risk management. UNDP also supported the development and adoption of recommendations on human security by member Governments. In April 2007, a human security framework for the Pacific was developed. In May 2007, a civil society platform on gender, peace and security was also established.

92. In 2007, UNDP also collaborated with PIF, the Australian Agency for International Development and the Commonwealth Ombudsman of Australia on a workplan to take forward Pacific Plan initiatives on anti-corruption and ombudsman functions. In August 2007, UNDP and PIF co-funded a business forum as part of a strategy to promote public-private sector dialogue at the regional and national level. Support was rendered to the Pacific Islands Private Sector Organization, enabling the fledgling body to establish itself as a leading agency for promoting private sector development throughout the Pacific region. In May 2008, the Department of Political Affairs, UNDP and its Pacific Centre, PIF and the University of the South Pacific co-hosted an expert meeting on sharing experience and the constructive management of conflict. The workshop was held in Port Vila, with high-level

government representatives, civil society actors and religious leaders from Fiji, Papua New Guinea, including from Bougainville, the Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. The workshop drew lessons on conflict management and constructive dialogue processes from cases within the region to further inform and stimulate peace initiatives and processes in each of the five countries.

93. ESCAP and PIF jointly organized the 12th Consultative Meeting of Executive Heads of Subregional Organizations in Noumea in March 2008, focusing on subregional cooperation, food security, climate change and energy security, and Pacific connectivity. ESCAP has assisted PIF in establishing a regional action framework for the implementation of the Pacific Urban Agenda, adopted at the Pacific Urban Management Support Programme Workshop in Brisbane in October 2007. In the area of promoting a rights-based society for persons with disabilities, ESCAP organized an Expert Group Meeting on Disability in March 2007, in cooperation with the Pacific Disability Forum and PIF.

94. UNEP supports the implementation of the Pacific Plan, specifically in the area of sustainable development. It supports activities of the secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, covering ozone, climate change, marine, biosafety, natural resources and environmental educational activities and projects. UNEP has also supported the development of the Pacific Education for Sustainable Development Framework, adopted by ministers of education in 2007.

95. UNICEF collaborates closely with PIF in implementing a food fortification strategy to enhance the nutrition of children and families, and is currently working on a framework through which it will support PIF to produce regional reports on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the quality of child-focused data and the integrity of budgeting for children. UNICEF and PIF are also focusing their cooperation on the implications of climate change. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs and PIF have developed and implemented capacity-building activities for Pacific small island States, in particular national sustainable development strategies.

96. FAO is assisting PIF in the implementation of the regional programme for food security, strengthening its policy, trade, planning and food safety management capacity and harmonizing agricultural and trade policies, including support in developing common markets for food products.

97. In October 2007, the meeting of the leaders of the smaller island States within PIF called for a report on the sustainability and quality of both national and regional meteorological services, which rely on the Fiji Meteorological Service, also designated a regional specialized meteorological centre and tropical cyclone centre. In response, a policy paper describing options and practical proposals for strengthening meteorological services was presented to the PIF Leaders' Meeting in August 2008.

N. Southern African Development Community

98. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs supported the consultative meeting of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) on the New Partnership for Africa's Development and social policy development in Johannesburg, South Africa, in November 2006. Together with SADC, it is

implementing a project on strengthening statistical capacity-building in support of the Millennium Development Goals. In the period 2006-2009, it will also strengthen national statistical systems in the region and the statistical capacity of the SADC secretariat so as to promote regional statistical coordination.

99. FAO provided support to the formulation and implementation of a SADC regional programme for food security, including its strengthening of policy, trade, planning and food safety management capacity. FAO is collaborating in the harmonization of agricultural and trade policies, including the development of common markets for food products.

100. The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction has supported the development by SADC of regional and subregional disaster risk reduction strategies and programmes. Representatives of Governments have participated in training courses organized by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in disaster assistance and coordination, civil-military coordination and international search and rescue, thereby strengthening regional disaster management capacities.

101. UNCTAD has collaborated with SADC on issues of regional integration and the multilateral trading system, including capacity-building for service assessment and negotiations. To that effect, a number of national workshops were organized. National assessment studies on trade in services are now being undertaken in all SADC member States. In 2007, UNCTAD helped organize several trade negotiating forums, which resulted in the adoption of the SADC Protocol on Trade and Services. UNCTAD and SADC partnered to create an interactive web-based tool that serves as an online source of trade-related information for the region.

102. UNEP has continued to work closely with SADC to ensure the adoption and implementation of the subregional Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, under the leadership of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment.

103. UNIDO has provided technical assistance to SADC. It helped draw up programmes that focus on upgrading and capacity-building of industrial support institutions and the modernization of selected small- and medium-sized enterprises in specific industrial sectors, including certification by the International Organization for Standardization and the promotion of investment and technology partnerships.

104. WFP has continued to provide technical assistance to national vulnerability assessment committees in the region, and assisted in the establishment of the SADC Programme Management Unit, which supports regional and national committees consisting of United Nations entities, NGOs, government departments and the private sector. WFP has continued to be the lead agency for the procurement of funds from the Government of South Africa and has continued to manage the funds for the SADC regional vulnerability assessment committee.

III. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

A. Overall support by parliaments to the United Nations

105. During the Statutory Assemblies of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) of 2007 and 2008, member parliaments addressed global issues that were also high on the United Nations agenda and adopted resolutions aimed at enhancing parliamentary action in support of major United Nations processes. The resolutions cover, inter alia, climate change, poverty eradication, human trafficking and migration, employment, official development assistance, peaceful coexistence of religions and cultures, and terrorism. They were circulated as a document of the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 3 of its resolution 57/47. The Assemblies were well attended by United Nations system representatives. UNICEF organized field visits in the host country of each Assembly (Indonesia and South Africa) to familiarize parliamentarians with United Nations operations dealing with children's rights. Thematic debates of the General Assembly in 2007 and 2008, such as those on the Millennium Development Goals, climate change and human trafficking, benefited from the substantive contribution of leading members of parliament, who also reported on their activities within IPU.

106. IPU established a new plenary Committee on United Nations Affairs, which met for the first time in October 2007. It will formulate and monitor proposals for developing the IPU/United Nations relationship and examine major United Nations issues, including funding and accountability. It will scrutinize reform efforts, in particular the One United Nations strategy (see A/61/583), the revitalization of the General Assembly, the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council and questions relating to funding. In November 2007, IPU and UNDP signed a memorandum of understanding providing a framework for joint activities in areas such as democratic governance, poverty reduction, development cooperation and women's empowerment.

107. IPU has been involved in the development of system-wide strategies for consideration by the United Nations system and the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination. In September 2006, the IPU Secretary-General suggested to the High-Level Committee on Programmes of the Board more structured consultations and coordination between the two organizations. He has pursued the matter with the executive heads of ILO and WTO, who have since conducted a review of the functioning of the Board.

B. Contribution of parliaments to major United Nations events

108. The first joint IPU/United Nations parliamentary hearing took place in November 2007. Letters of convocation to all parliaments, co-signed by the Presidents of the General Assembly and of IPU, received an enthusiastic response. Over 200 members of parliament took part in the hearing, which focused on reinforcing the rule of law in international relations and offered an opportunity for a substantive exchange among legislators, diplomats, United Nations officials, civil society representatives and academics. The event sought to help bridge the implementation gap affecting international commitments in the areas of

disarmament, counter-terrorism and the administration of international criminal justice.

109. Acknowledging the role of parliaments in the response against HIV/AIDS, in its resolution 62/178, the General Assembly encouraged Member States to include parliamentarians in national delegations to the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS in June 2008. On the eve of the session, IPU briefed parliamentarians to explore some of the critical issues being discussed, featuring presentations by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and UNDP on challenges in implementing effective responses to the epidemic. A parliamentary action on AIDS event brought together a select group of parliamentarians, permanent representatives, United Nations officials and heads of civil society organizations, who explored options to advance the fight against HIV/AIDS.

110. IPU also participated in the ILO Forum on Decent Work for a Fair Globalization, held in Lisbon in November 2007. IPU held a panel discussion on the role of parliaments in promoting the accountability and coherence of public policy for decent work and fair globalization. During the Global Forum to Fight Human Trafficking, held in Vienna in February 2008, IPU, in cooperation with UNODC, held a parliamentary forum to share experience and best practices, while examining ways in which parliaments and parliamentarians could be more actively involved in the global fight against human trafficking. At the twelfth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, held in Accra in April 2008, IPU circulated a parliamentary message adopted by the 118th IPU Assembly, reiterating its support for the Conference while conveying the parliaments' views with respect to the social and economic risks of globalization. At the High-Level Conference on World Food Security, held in Rome in June 2008, IPU highlighted the need for a new global policy on food based on democratic values.

C. Peace and security

111. IPU held regional workshops for South America (Bolivia, June 2007), Central America (El Salvador, May 2008) and Africa (Sierra Leone, June 2008) aimed at assisting parliaments in post-conflict situations to meet their responsibilities in addressing the wounds of the past and building viable societies. Mirroring the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, IPU intensified its efforts in support of new parliaments in Burundi and Sierra Leone. Activities focused on developing and implementing inclusive parliamentary procedures, enhancing dialogue among majority and minority political parties and consolidating capacities for parliaments to participate in the national reconciliation processes. IPU organized a thematic panel discussion on parliaments, peacebuilding and reconciliation in New York in June 2008 to share parliamentary experience in such processes.

112. IPU joined the Group of Friends of the Alliance of Civilizations to contribute to allaying common misconceptions regarding cultures and religions and assisting in building common purpose and shared values among peoples. During its 116th Assembly, IPU adopted a resolution entitled "Ensuring respect for and peaceful coexistence between all religious communities and beliefs in a globalized world". IPU also followed closely the peace process for a two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict along the United Nations road map. The 118th Assembly

adopted a resolution on the subject in April 2008. IPU also conducted a field mission to the region earlier in the year.

113. A regional seminar on the roles of national parliaments and the SADC Parliamentary Forum in enhancing security in Southern Africa was held in Luanda in February 2008. Organized by the SADC Parliamentary Leadership Centre and IPU with the support of the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces and the Institute for Security Studies, it provided members and staff of parliamentary committees from SADC member States, Burundi and Rwanda with an opportunity to share experience and make recommendations to improve parliamentary oversight in the security sector. The initiative followed a previous regional seminar on security sector reform for South-East Asia and the wider Asia-Pacific region in Phuket, Thailand, in September 2006.

D. Economic, social and environmental development

114. IPU was involved in shaping the agenda and working procedures of the new Development Cooperation Forum of the Economic and Social Council. The IPU Secretary-General was a member of the Advisory Group of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs on the work of the Forum. IPU participated in the preparatory events for the 2008 meeting of the Forum, including the Vienna and Cairo symposiums, and the official launch of the Development Cooperation Forum in Geneva in July 2007. IPU was co-organizer of the parliamentary segment of the stakeholder forum on the role of national and local stakeholders in contributing to aid quality and effectiveness in Rome in June 2008. Its report was introduced to the Development Cooperation Forum at its first substantive session, held in New York in July.

115. Following the 117th IPU Assembly, which took as its general theme "Global warming: 10 years after Kyoto", a parliamentary campaign was launched to help sustain the political momentum for the new round of negotiations on a post-Kyoto regime, premised on the recommendations of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. As part of its campaign, IPU surveyed parliaments to prompt a self-assessment of the work and to encourage further action. The Secretary-General was briefed on the campaign during his official visit to IPU in Geneva in July 2007.

116. As part of a joint IPU/UNITAR capacity-building initiative on sustainable development for members of parliaments, IPU, UNDP and the National Assembly of the Lao People's Democratic Republic held a regional seminar on sustainable development for the parliaments of the Asia-Pacific region in Vientiane in November 2007. The seminar focused on poverty reduction, energy and biodiversity. It concluded with the adoption of recommendations for action by parliaments related to education and sensitization; financial resources and efficient use thereof; effective cooperation at the global, regional, subnational and community levels; and a research programme on the use of suitable technologies.

117. In partnership with the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, IPU has been promoting parliaments' more active involvement in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010. A pilot project involving some 10 parliaments was launched in Bagamoyo, United Republic of Tanzania, in December 2007, which

brought together members of parliament, United Nations resident coordinators and government focal points. The project will be broadened to involve all parliaments of the least developed countries in the next biennium. IPU has joined the inter-agency consultative group chaired by the High Representative, which will drive the preparations for the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

118. IPU has worked to provide political backing for and create an effective parliamentary dimension to the Doha round of trade negotiations. It has helped sensitize hundreds of members of parliamentary trade and economic committees to a broad spectrum of international trade issues, including the question of greater WTO transparency and accountability. Two annual sessions of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO were held in Geneva, in December 2006 and September 2008 respectively, testifying to its utility as a vehicle for dialogue between WTO negotiators and members of parliament. The dialogue continued at the Conference Steering Committee, which has regularly been addressed by the WTO Director-General and the chairpersons of major WTO negotiating groups. As part of the annual WTO Public Forum, in October 2007, IPU organized a parliamentary panel discussion on trade and climate change: is trade killing our planet?

119. The IPU Advisory Group on HIV/AIDS was set up to enlist the full force of the world's legislatures in the fight against the epidemic. It works in close collaboration with UNAIDS and UNDP. In 2007, the Group made a field visit to Brazil and met with a broad spectrum of people involved in Brazil's national programme, including the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, the Minister of Health, representatives of the United Nations and non-governmental organizations, and people living with HIV/AIDS. At the year's end, the first Global Parliamentary Meeting on HIV/AIDS was held in Manila, on the eve of World AIDS Day. Participants discussed stigma and discrimination, affordability of drugs, vulnerable groups, legalization and criminalization issues and budgeting. Another highlight was the launch of a handbook for parliamentarians entitled "Taking action against HIV", produced by the Advisory Group, UNAIDS and UNDP. The handbook is a comprehensive reference that legislators and their staff can consult for information and guidance on a wide range of issues relating to the epidemic.

120. In April 2008, IPU mobilized action in favour of implementation of the Millennium Development Goals at a special session for parliamentarians during the "Countdown to 2015" Conference in South Africa, focusing on parliamentary action to reduce preventable maternal, newborn and child deaths in developing countries. It was agreed that IPU, with the support of Countdown to 2015 partners, would mobilize and assist parliaments in the countries concerned to take action to reduce child and maternal mortality and report on progress to the 120th IPU Assembly in Addis Ababa in 2009. A panel discussion on maternal and child survival was organized by IPU and UNICEF during the 118th Assembly, where the results of the Countdown to 2015 report and the UNICEF report *The State of the World's Children 2008* were presented. Twenty-two members of parliament from diverse geographical regions visited three UNICEF-supported projects that work with vulnerable mothers and children and reported their experiences at the closing session of the 118th Assembly.

121. In December 2006, the Global Centre for Information and Communication Technologies in Parliament opened in Rome. The Centre is a joint IPU/United

Nations enterprise, supported by the Governments of Italy and the Netherlands and the Inter-American Development Bank. The Centre provides hands-on assistance to parliaments in developing their information and communication technology capacities and promotes parliamentary follow-up on the commitments made at the World Summit on the Information Society. The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs sits on the board of the Centre together with the IPU President and a number of parliament speakers. In February 2008, IPU and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs issued the first *World e-Parliament Report*, representing an effort to establish a baseline of how parliaments are using, or planning to use, information and communications technology to help them carry out their representative, law-making and oversight responsibilities and to connect to their constituencies. It also intends to advance a shared knowledge base among parliaments and to facilitate information exchange among them.

E. Democracy and human rights

122. IPU continued to support parliaments in Afghanistan, Burundi, Cambodia, the Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, the Maldives, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste and the United Arab Emirates. UNDP has been an important partner in many of the projects aimed at strengthening the capacities of parliamentarians and their staff, modernizing the procedures and services of parliaments, providing assistance to parliamentary committees, improving communications services and promoting gender-mainstreaming activities. The Burundi project included a series of activities to support women legislators funded by the United Nations Democracy Fund. Needs assessment missions went to the parliaments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone, which are now being considered for multi-year programmes of assistance.

123. The question of minority representation as a cornerstone of democracy was taken up by an IPU/UNDP seminar in March 2007, which brought together a group of experts from parliaments, academia and international organizations. It laid the foundation for further normative work and a new study on the representation of minorities in politics that IPU is undertaking in cooperation with UNDP, raising awareness and serving as an advocacy tool for greater parliamentary representation of minorities. IPU organized a parliamentary forum in Vienna in June 2007 on transparency and accountability as a means of restoring trust in governing institutions. Parliamentarians attending the Seventh Global Forum on Reinventing Government came together for an in-depth discussion of the prerequisites and mechanisms for holding government to account in the twenty-first century. The budgetary process and parliamentary oversight of the security sector were also on the agenda.

124. IPU has been a driving force in advancing the United Nations agenda for new or restored democracies. At a meeting of the Sixth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies in November 2006, parliamentarians from some 70 countries pledged to help mobilize parliaments in support of democracy worldwide. A joint statement was adopted, where participants committed themselves to strengthening partnerships within the Conference process. A special mechanism was created to follow up on the recommendations contained in the plan of action for the period between the sixth and seventh Conferences. In anticipation of the first International Day of Democracy, on 15 September 2008, IPU has encouraged

national parliaments to stage a series of awareness-raising activities on the value of democracy as a political culture and a set of institutional practices.

125. A *Handbook for Parliamentarians on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol; From Exclusion to Equality: Realizing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* was published jointly by IPU, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and OHCHR in 2007. The *Handbook* is currently available in Arabic, English, French and Spanish, and is designed to improve understanding among parliamentarians and practitioners of how to apply the new Convention. IPU has endorsed the Convention and is currently developing an institutional policy to uphold the rights of persons with disabilities.

126. The 118th Assembly, held in Cape Town in April 2008, debated and adopted a comprehensive resolution calling for parliamentary action to protect migrant workers, combat human trafficking and xenophobia, and uphold human rights. The subject was immediately taken up at an African parliamentary conference in Rabat, organized by the African Parliamentary Union and IPU, with support from the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Organization for Migration, OHCHR and UNHCR. It discussed African migration challenges, problems and possible solutions. Earlier, in October 2007, in cooperation with OHCHR and ILO, IPU had convened a seminar in Geneva for members of parliamentary human rights committees and other committees addressing migration issues to discuss the theme of migration from a human rights perspective.

127. Also at the 118th Assembly, OHCHR supplied background documents on human rights, terrorism and counter-terrorism and provided the drafting committee and interested delegations with technical advice and guidance on security and human rights themes. In its resolution entitled "The role of parliaments in striking a balance between national security, human security and individual freedoms, and in averting the threat to democracy", the Assembly urged national parliaments to enact effective anti-terrorism legislation, in keeping with relevant international instruments and commitments, including the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and to assess such laws at regular intervals so as to ensure that they were fully compatible with national security and individual freedoms; and called upon parliaments to review the adequacy of the legal measures they had in place to protect people from terrorist attacks, bring perpetrators to justice and take such measures as deemed necessary to provide adequate protection.

128. In early 2007, IPU and UNICEF published a *Handbook for Parliamentarians: Eliminating Violence against Children*. The *Handbook* illustrates measures that parliaments could take to prevent violence from occurring by building a protective environment for children. Within the context of a regional seminar in Pakistan in July 2007, IPU and UNICEF launched a regional guide for South Asian parliamentarians on the protection of children in conflict with the law, which builds on the findings of a UNICEF survey and includes practical recommendations for parliamentary action.

129. Also in 2007, IPU began implementing a joint project with OHCHR, funded by the United Nations Democracy Fund, aimed at enhancing the involvement of parliaments in the work of the United Nations and regional human rights mechanisms, in particular the United Nations treaty bodies. Initially, the project was targeting parliaments in French-speaking Africa. Following a regional seminar held in Burkina Faso in October 2007, national seminars were held in Mali and Togo in

February 2008 and in Mauritania in May 2008. Each national seminar will be followed up by a second event, at the end of 2008, to evaluate the parliamentarians' strategies for putting into practice the recommendations of the treaty bodies that they had prepared during the first events.

130. OHCHR, jointly with the Ombudsman's Office of Azerbaijan and IPU, is planning a workshop on international human rights standards for selected members of the parliament of Azerbaijan. The workshop will be held in September 2008 and will be based on the OHCHR *Human Rights: a Handbook for Parliamentarians*, translated into the Azeri language with OHCHR support. OHCHR has invited IPU to present its human rights work at seminars on United Nations human rights mechanisms for members of national human rights institutions, civil society and the media.

F. Gender issues

131. IPU and the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Secretariat organized joint information meetings during the fifty-first and fifty-second sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women, designed to brief participants on the input of parliamentarians to the Commission's thematic discussions. IPU also participated in the observance of International Women's Day.

132. During the fifty-first session of the Commission, nearly half of the world's women parliamentary speakers met to explore the part they could play in caring for girls, the next generation of women. The meeting examined some of the prejudices levelled at girls and agreed on the importance of women speakers as role models for future generations. The 2008 meeting of women speakers addressed the issue of combating poverty: investing in women, which provided an opportunity to discuss the conclusions of the Commission at its fifty-second session. The results of the two meetings were brought to the attention of the Commission by the President of the IPU Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians.

133. At the fifty-first session of the Commission, in 2007, the International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics (iKNOW Politics) was launched as a project of IPU, UNDP, UNIFEM, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs of the United States of America and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. Working primarily as an online facility, iKNOW Politics is designed to serve the needs of elected officials, candidates, political party leaders and members, researchers, students and other practitioners interested in advancing women in politics.

134. IPU has continued to contribute statistics on women in parliament to the UNDP Human Development Reports and has also provided data for the Millennium Development Goal Indicators measuring progress on gender equality. The world map, Women in Politics: 2008, a joint IPU/United Nations product, was issued in February. Based on an annual global survey, it highlights in vivid colours the statistics for women in both legislative and executive branches of government.

135. In October 2007, a joint IPU/ILO Conference on Women and Work focused on the reasons why women, who account for almost 40 per cent of the total workforce, continued to earn less than men in similar jobs and were more vulnerable to discrimination and exploitation. Also in October, IPU and the Division for the

Advancement of Women conducted a seminar on implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Since 2006, IPU has regularly made written and oral reports on various States to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

136. IPU and UNDP organized two seminars in Algeria for members of parliament and political parties on the promotion of women in politics and mechanisms that facilitate their access to parliament. IPU also addressed the General Assembly on the question of institutional gender-mainstreaming, sharing relevant experience in the context of informal consultations on United Nations system-wide coherence.

G. IPU secretariat

137. In response to the call to international organizations by the Secretary-General to eliminate wasteful practices, IPU has proceeded to map its carbon footprint and made provisions in its operating budget to purchase carbon credits to offset the environmental damage of official air travel. IPU has been a member of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund since 2005. It regularly attends Pension Board meetings and benefits from the services of the International Civil Service Commission, the United Nations Administrative Tribunal and the ILO Social Security Department.

H. Conclusions

138. The IPU Secretary-General welcomes the close and substantive relationship between the United Nations and the Union and supports efforts to forge a strategic partnership between the two organizations in the pursuit of world peace, security, development and democratic practice. He also welcomes the trend of including legislators as members of national delegations to important United Nations meetings and events and hopes that this will become a more regular and systematic practice.

139. IPU/United Nations cooperation has sharpened awareness among parliamentarians everywhere of issues of concern to the United Nations in a most cost-effective way. This has secured valuable returns to the Organization in terms of strengthened political awareness and support, enhanced national ownership and higher probability of effective follow-up action. The General Assembly, therefore, may wish to explore more fully the relationship between the United Nations and national parliaments, through IPU, by devoting a specific agenda item to that relationship.

140. The Secretary-General values the joint United Nations/IPU annual parliamentary hearing and encourages closer cooperation in establishing the agenda for that important meeting. He recommends that the outcome document of the hearing be circulated as an official United Nations document. He also promotes a regular annual exchange between the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and the senior leadership of IPU with a view to building greater coherence in the work of the two organizations and maximizing parliamentary support for the United Nations.

IV. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization

141. The report of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons on the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction for the year 2006 was submitted to the General Assembly pursuant to the provisions of article IV, paragraph 1, of the Agreement concerning the Relationship between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (General Assembly resolution 55/283, annex).

142. The report of the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization covering the year 2006 was submitted to the General Assembly pursuant to the provisions of article IV, paragraph 1, of the Agreement to Regulate the Relationship between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (General Assembly resolution 54/280, annex).

143. Since only a limited number of copies of the reports were made available, it was not possible to make a full distribution. Delegations are therefore requested to have the copies transmitted to them during the discussion of the item.